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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [SU](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: GHAZI TOUTS PROGRESS ON CPA, CHAD BUT EXPRESSES
DIM HOPES FOR BILATERAL PROGRESS

REF: KHARTOUM 1400

Classified By: A/CDA Mark L. Asquino for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SE) Summary: In a December 13 meeting with Special Envoy Gration, Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salaheddin called the December 13 Agreement between the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) on outstanding Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) issues (reftel) a "significant step forward," but expressed concern that it would be perceived as validating the success of SPLM-led demonstrations in Khartoum and would pave the way for more provocation. He emphasized that elections were the only way to clear the political tension, expressing confidence in the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and satisfaction with the results of voter registration. Ghazi was also happy to announce the next step in confidence-building measures between Chad and Sudan, a visit to Khartoum by Chadian Foreign Minister Faki scheduled for December 23. A Chad-Sudan rapprochement will change the dynamics of the Darfur situation considerably, he said, though he believes Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole and his team are moving too slowly to capitalize on the new developments. Emphasizing the urgency of finding a political solution to Darfur before the April 2010 elections, Ghazi stated the Government of Sudan (GOS) was willing to negotiate directly with the rebels (without Bassole) if necessary. He also expressed pessimism over the prospect of improved bilateral relations with the United States, predicting that no matter what progress is achieved on the CPA and Darfur, the use of the term "genocide" in recent statements and the U.S. Strategy on Sudan will hamper any attempt to provide incentives to the NCP regime. End Summary.

12. (C) Ghazi called the December 13 agreement between the NCP and SPLM on five critical CPA issues (reftel) "a significant step forward," though he admitted he was unsure it would change the volatile nature of the parties' relationship. He expressed concern that following the Juba Alliance of opposition parties' demonstrations in Khartoum on December 7 and 14, the SPLM has come to a realization that "it pays to agitate" and urged SE Gration to push the SPLM towards more responsible behavior. Until now the NCP has remained a responsible actor, he said, ominously noting that if his party had decided to stir up trouble in Southern Sudan the results would have been "much harsher," adding that: "We all know how fragile the South is." He defended the regime's response to the protests, stating, "The authorities did their jobs and they did them very well." He also criticized the SPLM for "falsely" portraying itself to be in opposition to the NCP, when it is in fact a partner in the Government of National Unity. "The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is a relic of the past," he said.

13. (C) Ghazi said he expected additional Juba Alliance provocations in the future, the only solution to which was free and fair elections, "to separate the wheat from the chaff." He expressed confidence in the NEC and contentment with the results of voter registration, characterizing the nearly 16 million registered voters out of 20 million eligible as "an enviable percentage, even in industrialized countries." He predicted a tense atmosphere for the next several months of campaigning leading up to the elections, which he emphasized must be held on time. "This is a red line for the NCP," he said. Ghazi also noted NCP asked the SPLM to consider partnering for the upcoming elections or accept some level of coordination between the two parties, but the SPLM has been noncommittal.

14. (C) Ghazi was happy to announce to SE Gration that progress is being made in confidence building measures between Chad and Sudan based on the 2006 Dakar Agreement. Following an October 10 visit by Ghazi to N'Djamena, it has been agreed that Chadian Foreign Minister Musa Faki will lead a delegation to Khartoum on December 23, based on the movement of Chadian rebels away from Chad's eastern border. Ghazi urged that this information be kept close hold until he determined "the right time" to announce it publicly. The emerging Chad-Sudan rapprochement "will change the dynamic of Darfur situation considerably," Ghazi predicted, adding that intransigent rebel leaders Khalil Ibrahim and Abdul Wahid will realize that the GOS has other options. Khalil Ibrahim has now given signals he is ready to negotiate, according to Ghazi, as have the so-called Addis Group of factions and the more marginal SLA/Revolutionary Forces (SLA/RF), also known as the Tripoli Group.

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15. (C) Ghazi expressed concern that Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole and his team were working too slowly to capitalize on the new developments. Bassole is planning "yet another consultation" in Doha for January 2010, a timeline which Ghazi finds unacceptable. "In April, we will have a new government, and I may no longer be responsible for the Darfur file," he said, adding that an agreement must be reached by February or March at the latest. Even during this time Ghazi noted that will he be busy "running for office, canvassing for votes" so the sooner a negotiation can be held, the better. Ghazi noted that African Union Panel on Darfur (AUPD) Chair Thabo Mbeki had been privately critical at the slow pace of Bassole, and urged additional pressure on Bassole and the Qataris to expedite the peace process. "We will send a clear signal to both in the coming days," he said. If the Doha process proves inadequate, the GOS is willing to negotiate directly, he said.

16. (C) With regard to security on the ground in Darfur, Ghazi noted that the regime is doing it's utmost to curb the trend of kidnapping of foreigners. He confirmed the release of the two UNAMID civilian staff kidnapped in Zalingei who were held for over three months, and noted that the GOS "is working discretely and cautiously" to free International Committee of the Red Cross staff whose release he expected "in the coming days." He acknowledged that lawlessness and insecurity remain a problem, noting that several days prior an esteemed tribal leader and NCP parliament member was gunned down outside of Nyala. He was careful to characterize the banditry and lawlessness easier to combat than rebel attacks, the latter of which he hoped would end completely thanks to the confidence building measure between Sudan and Chad. He also noted that in early 2010, the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) will hold a donor conference in Sharm Al Sheikh, Egypt dedicated to development in Darfur.

17. (C) Ghazi closed the meeting with several pessimistic remarks on bilateral relations. Following his viewing of SE Gration's latest testimony before the House Subcommittee on African and Global Health, Ghazi declared that he is more convinced than ever that in the GOS push for better bilateral

relations with the USG "the battle is already lost." He attributed this to the labeling of the Darfur conflict as "genocide" in the Sudan Strategy document and in recent statements, noting that "no matter what progress we achieve on the ground, in the annals of U.S. politics we are still considered a genocidal regime," to which no concessions can be granted. While noting he has never doubted the sincerity of SE Gration to act as honest broker, he urged that "you need to re-think your strategy" to improve bilateral relations.

18. (SBU) SE Gration cleared this cable prior to departure.
ASQUINO